

DrJava as an IDE for CS1

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DrJava is quite useful as an introductory IDE. Its strongest feature is an interactions pane that contains a Java interpreter. As a result, users can manipulate Java code expressions and statements directly as well as to call pre-compiled code. Because of the interactions pane, I am able to avoid much of the "magic" that is involved in introducing students to Java. In particular, I do not introduce the main method until the second half of the course, after the students are already familiar with classes and objects, methods and parameters, static variables and methods, and arrays. Another advantage of DrJava is that the IDE is a freeware jar file, and as such it can run on any system.